

# Tangi officials split over districting

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Despite Census 2010 data showing Tangipahoa Parish's population is large enough to give it a dedicated state Senate seat, some local and state elected officials have voiced a desire to maintain at least two Senate districts in the parish.

State Rep. Stephen E. Pugh, a member the Joint Committee on Governmental Affairs, said he is pushing a "Tangipahoa-cored" state senator.

"I feel that down at the south end of the parish, we could accommodate a cored senator in that area, with a majority of voters would have to come from Tangipahoa," said Pugh, R-Ponchatoula.

Tangipahoa Parish is currently part of three Senate districts: District 6, which includes parts of Orleans and Jefferson parishes and stretches into a southeastern swath of Tangipahoa; District 11, which follows

the Interstate-12 corridor in St. Tammany and Tangipahoa parishes, and District 12, which covers Washington Parish and northern parts of Tangipahoa, St. Tammany and St. Helena parishes.

State Sen. Jack Donahue, R-Mandeville, who represents much of southern Tangipahoa Parish, has been great for Hammond and Ponchatoula, Pugh said, but "now is the time to get our own person."

Pugh cited the population growth as a reason that the parish needs a senator based in the Tangipahoa.

Tangipahoa Parish's population in 2000 was just over 100,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau website. The current population is about 121,000, Parish President Gordon Burgess said.

The Legislature meets March 20 to redraw state legislative, congressional and other boundaries. The ideal population for

state Senate districts is now 116,240 compared to 114,589 in 2000 and the ideal population for state House districts is now 43,174 compared to 42,561 in 2000, according to data presented during public hearings on redistricting.

In the past, there have been calls for a unified Tangipahoa Parish district, Hammond Mayor Mayson Foster said.

"We are a long, narrow, north-south parish," Foster said. "We should maintain the current split."

Burgess agreed, saying that the more voices in the Legislature, the better.

"Two is better than one, and three is better than two," Burgess said. "I don't think we would be best served by having only one senator."

Foster told a Joint Government Affairs Committee hearing in Covington on Feb. 17 that the communities on the southern end of the parish — Ham-

mond and Ponchatoula — are part of the I-12 corridor.

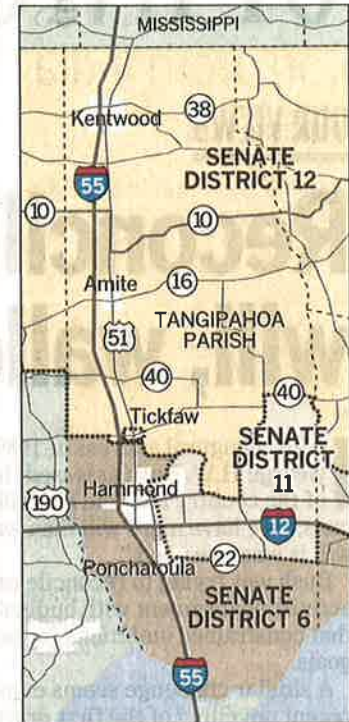
The I-12 corridor in Tangipahoa is one of the fastest growing areas of the parish, Foster said, and therefore requires different representation from the northern, and more rural, part of the parish.

Foster said key differences exist between the two ends of the parish on such things as land use management. The southern end has zoning, Foster said, and the northern end does not.

"We are more urbanized and the northern end is more rural," Foster said. "Therefore we have different objectives when it comes to representation in Baton Rouge."

Pugh said keeping Senate District 6, represented by Julie Quinn, R-Metairie, would not be his preference.

"No offense to Ms. Quinn," he said. "I would like to see something done about that."



Advocate map